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SUPPLEMENT TO REPORT  
OF  
THE INTELLIGENCE OFFICER ON TOUR WITH THE SUPERIN-  
TENDENT, NORTHERN SHAN STATES,  
1895-96.



A FEW NOTES ABOUT THE CHINESE FRONTIER AND PROVINCES OF MONG  
LEM, KENG HUNG, AND CHIEN PIEN, VIDE MAP IN POCKET.

THE present approximate proposed frontier line between Britain and China is roughly sketched in on the map attached; but solely, having regard to the commencement of the Irrawaddy-Salween line, I propose to discuss in a few words the question whether, now that it is intended to carry the line through, we cannot do better for ourselves than accept that section of the boundary line from a point where, starting a few miles east of the Kunlôn Ferry, it runs generally in a south-easterly direction until it finally touches the Mekong south of the town of Kēng Hung. A few years ago on the list of the proposed extensions to the railway system in Burma, which it was intended to carry out, the Irrawaddy-Salween Scheme was one of the bottom if not the bottom on the list, and, though efforts had been made in Burma for sanction for the line to be commenced as speedily as possible, no great hopes were entertained that the line would actually be started for many years to come. Suddenly orders came from England that the construction of the line was to be at once commenced, a grant was sanctioned for preliminary expenses, and the line is now being actively pushed forward. The line is both a commercial and a strategic one, but the decision to commence its construction seems to have been mainly due to pressure from Manchester and other big manufacturing centres in England. The French were pushing forwards westwards towards Siam and northwards to China. If steps were not immediately taken, the trade, or the future creation and development of a trade, in that part of the world would fall entirely into French hands. To avert this the WEST RIVER was thrown open to navigation and the Irrawaddy-Salween line commenced. The Mandalay-Thibaw-Lashio-Kunlôn road is said to have been one of the old trade routes from China into Burma. Whether or no it was, it is not so now. Practically no trade comes by way of Kunlôn; Kunlôn itself is a mere collection of huts. However, the present terminus is to be at or near Kunlôn; and it is hoped that to Kunlôn all or a greater part of the future trade of south-west China will be attracted, and that the line, as well as being strategically important, will be financially a success. Mr. Bagley, the Chief Engineer of the line, in his report expects that the line will at all events pay its way in the Shan States alone and without reckoning on the prospect of an ever increasing trade with China, and he quotes figures and gives returns to prove this, but many officers I met in the Shan States seemed to have doubts whether there was a sufficient trade in these States alone or whether the country was densely populated enough to make the line financially a success, at any rate for some years to come. A glance at the map will show that the frontier line as proposed runs a few miles east only of the Kunlôn Ferry. The trade which it is hoped to attract is expected to come down north from Tali and east from Puerh and Sumao; but whatever be the prospects of trade, it stands to reason that—

(i) the further north towards Tali,

(ii) the further east towards the Mekong

we can arrange to fix the frontier, the better will those prospects be. Trade will be developed to a greater extent and more quickly under our rule than that of China. We have no pretexts for an extension of our frontier north towards Tali, so that an extension northwards need not be discussed, but we have pretexts, and some based on good grounds, for an extension eastwards right up to the Mekong. So far as I understand, the political situation with respect to the countries between the frontier as marked on the map and the Mekong, that is to say, Mong Lem, Keng Hung, and the sub-prefecture Chen Pien, it is shortly as follows. In the Convention which Lord Roseberry made with the Chinese Government Mong Lem and Keng Hung were ceded to China, but when Lord Salisbury came into power he refused to ratify this Convention on the grounds that China had broken faith with England and had permitted of a further French advance. The retention or cession to China therefore of Mong Lem and Kēng Hung seems to be still open.



Until we conquered Upper Burma Mong Lem and Kēng Hung appear to have paid tribute to both Burma and China, though the latter country no doubt exercised by far the greater influence in these two States. Captain Daly, Superintendent, Northern Shan States, in his report of 1891 gives a history of the two States of Mong Lem and Kēng Hung, and from a perusal of that history it appears that tributary presents (a list of the presents tendered is given in the Appendix to the report) were sent to Burma up to the time of King Mindon. King Thebaw seems to have taken little if any interest in the country, and the custom of sending presents appears to have ceased during his reign. The Convention then being unsigned, and the undoubted fact that up to within a comparatively recent period Mong Lem and Keng Hung were considered as much tributary to Burma as to China, leaves it still open to us to advance a claim that these two countries be considered as British territory. This gained, our eastern frontier would then be the Mekong continuously from Hon Luk in the Southern Shan States to that point where the boundary line between Mong Lem and the sub-prefecture Chen Pien touches the river. As regards Chen Pien, the third district which lies between our present proposed eastern frontier and Mekong, up to 1890 it seems to have belonged to no one particular. Mr. Scott in his report (1893) says regarding Chin Pien—

“Descending the flank of the Loi Kong Tum to the east, the boundary line the river Nam Hsung and up to King Mindon's time apparently *certainly followed this river to its junction with the Mekong*. I cannot learn that the Burmese asserted themselves in any way in this part of the country in the time of King Thebaw. It is, however, quite certain that the Chinese did not cross the Tangpa Haw (Nam Hsung) until *after* the annexation of Upper Burma, and the real great forward movement dates from 1891.”

The Chinese have anticipated us and are now in actual possession of Chen Pien, but, according to Mr. Scott, the country used to belong to Burma and we might lay a claim to it on that score or we might acquire it by a suitable concession elsewhere. One way or the other, we should endeavour to make it British territory, and in that event the Mekong would still be our eastern frontier as far north as the junction of the river Nam Hsung with the Mekong, that is, the old Burmese frontier.

Commercially we should, being on the Mekong, be far better placed than if we accept the present proposed cramped and irregular boundary. We should be only a few miles distant from Puerh and Sumao, two of the most important towns in the south-west corner of Yunnan, and, should the trade of Yunnan fall short of expectations, we should be in a better position and have a better chance of creating a trade, being on the Mekong, than if we limit ourselves to the Kong Ming Shan range. A good dry-weather cart-road could be immediately started from the Kunlön Ferry down the valley of the Nam Hsung to the Mekong, a second road from Lashio through Mong Yai, capital of the South Theinni State, West and East Mong Lun (crossing the Salween by ferry at any convenient point) through Mong Lem to Keng Hung would act as feeders to the terminus at Kunlön and open up the whole country for traffic. The Mong Lem and Kēng Hung people would far rather be under Britain than China; and as regards Chen Pien, whilst at Taküt in March this year, the Superintendent, Northern Shan States, received letters from over the proposed border to the north-east, that is, Chen Pien, petitioning for our presence and protection, and stating that trading was impossible owing to the rapacity of local Chinese officials. The greater part of the country west and east between the Salween and the Mekong and north and south between the 22nd and 24th parallels of latitude is reported to be rich in mineral wealth. The reports are perhaps exaggerated, but there is reason to believe that there is a very good foundation for them. The Chinese have at various periods and in various parts of this country worked both silver and lead mines. At Nawng Hkeo, or the “Golden Lake,” and at the sources of the Nam Hka and its northerly tributaries gold is reported to exist in quantities. The Burmese made an attempt to get gold, but failed, and guarded as this particular tract is by tribes wilder and more savage perhaps than any other in Asia, it is doubtful whether even the ubiquitous Chinaman would make the persistent efforts he has for many years past been making to take possession, unless he were



certain that his efforts would be finally rewarded by the discovery of gold. Captain Daly, in his report previously referred to by me, states that the country is minerally wealthy, and he strongly recommended that an expert should be attached to the next column working through the country for the purpose of making a reliable report on its mineral wealth. It is therefore a matter of surprise that an expert did not accompany Mr. Scott in his tour through the Wā country. If the country be minerally wealthy, the financial success of the Irrawaddy-Salween line is of course assured. We cannot expect to attract to our terminus much of the trade of Eastern Yunnan. Now that the west river is open for navigation the trade of Eastern Yunnan is bound to go to the coast by that great waterway. There remains the western part of the province, and whether a great trade will eventually be created there or not, we are running a commercial race with France, the prize being the possession of that trade. If the retention of Mong Lem and Keng Hung be a commercial advantage to us in the race, then let us keep these provinces.

I have so far discussed a possible extension of our frontier eastwards from a point of view purely commercial. Let us now look at the question from a point of view strategical. With regard to France, so long as England retains command of the sea and can land troops on the Tonkin seaboard, no possible movements of French troops could take place so far inland: France would need all her troops to defend her sea-ports and what local levies she has on the Mekong could be easily dealt with by us; but there is no doubt that France regards Yunnan as the "natural Hinterland" to her Tonkin possessions, and she will sooner or later make a bid for a further advance northwards. Should this ever come to pass and Mong Lem, Keng Hung, and Chen Pien remain Chinese territory, there will be a tongue of China between us and the French which, in the event of an alliance between the two powers ever becoming *au fait accompli*, would bring their forces very close to the Salween. Even as it is, the salient angle, in the centre of which is the town of Kengtūng, formed by the junction of the Chinese and French frontiers in the Mekong, is not strategically good, for it admits of a Chinese advance towards Kengtūng from the north and a French advance on the same place from the east and south. On the Mekong we should be far more favourably situated, for we should then be on the direct flank of the French in the event of any further extension on their part taking place towards the north.

The Yunnanese probably possess higher fighting qualities than the Chinese who inhabit the sea-board and dwell in the valleys of the great waterways. They are well armed and, if properly led, it is not improbable that they would fight well. The country is well adapted for guerilla warfare, and, though of course it is at present out of the question for the Chinese to invade Burma, nevertheless in the event of a war with China, as others have pointed out before, it might be necessary for the sake of maintaining our prestige, to make an advance into Chinese territory instead of merely confining ourselves to guarding our frontier, and it is therefore quite within the bounds of possibility that in a not so very distant future we should find ourselves starting on an inland campaign with either Tali or Yunnan for an immediate objective. In the event of such happening, the advantage of being on the Mekong is obvious. Even if no forward movement were contemplated and we confined ourselves to merely guarding the salient angle in which Kengtūng is situated, it would be an awkward line to defend, and it would be open to our adversaries to cut the line of communications (a very long one) of Kengtūng with Fort Stedman. The Chinese could mass large bodies of troops in the mountainous districts near Mong Lem without our knowing anything of their movements. At present movements of Chinese troops on the east side the Kong Ming Shan range are quite unknown to us. It may be argued that, if we take the Mekong and the Nam Hsung as our frontier, there is still a salient angle and, moreover, a more dangerous one, in that it would be formed by the junction of two rivers. So there is, but we shall have our railway complete to Kunlön in the course of a few years and could therefore place troops very quickly on any threatened point in the angle. We cannot do so at Kengtūng; there is no railway to that place and the construction of one is not even contemplated.



After the behaviour of the Chinese in the recent war with Japan, and the way that huge Empire fell utterly to pieces it may seem absurd to talk seriously about war with China, or even to admit for a moment the possibility of a Chinese advance into British territory, but we have to recollect that the China of 10 or 15 years hence may not be the same as the China of today. The inhabitants of Yunnan, the province which adjoins British territory, are not as I have said before of the same weak stuff as the rest of China appears to be. The question with us of raising a Panthay or Yunnanese battalion for military police purposes on the frontier has gone, I understand, beyond mere talk. Under British officers such a battalion would do good work. French-Indo-China too adjoins Yunnan. What we are thinking of doing the French can also do. There is nothing to prevent French officers from taking service under China in Yunnan, who would be quite capable of organizing in a few years a really formidable Yunnanese force. Such a force under French or any European adventurers, if used against us and strategically well placed out at the outset of a campaign, would prove an adversary by no means to be despised and an adversary which might even turn the tables on us and take the initiative.

Whilst at Taküt this year the Political Officer, Northern Shan States, received reports to the effect that the Chinese had advanced to the west of the Kong Ming Shan range, that they were establishing themselves in the neighbourhood of Mong Hka and Mong Hsaw, and later reports to hand state that they are now at Loi Nung which, as also Mong Hka, is west even of the river Nam Hka. The Chinese are displaying more activity in this part of our certainly distant frontier than we are. The places above mentioned are undoubtedly in British territory, and it is about time that the Chinese were ordered to halt. I must say I am of opinion that the incursions of the Chinese have been encouraged and are due to a great extent to our policy of almost absolute non-intervention in local politics and affairs of this part of our dominions, a non-intervention due doubtless to the great distance this particular country is from our nearest posts and the consequent expense entailed in the despatch of expeditions thereto to look after and safeguard our interests, and partly in the hopes that as civilization advanced by means of the railway and other causes the tribes of themselves would become more and more civilized and settled.

To sum up shortly, all that I have endeavoured to show in the foregoing is that if, instead of accepting what I call the present proposed cramped boundary, we take as a frontier line the river Mekong as far north as the river Nam Hsung and this latter river itself up to Kokang, a frontier for taking which we have reasonable claims and pretexts, then the greater gainers will England be both commercially and strategically. Having pretexts to these provinces, I do not see how France could very well raise an objection to our retention of them. The matter would be entirely between China and ourselves. In speaking of Kēng Hung, I refer only to the Cis-Mekong portion of that province and not to Trans-Mekong Kēng Hung. Having just given up Mong Hsin east of the Mekong, to now claim Trans-Mekong Kēng Hung, which lies immediately to the north of Mong Hsin, would be perhaps to unnecessarily irritate France. We could very well abandon whatever claim we have to that part of Kēng Hung on condition that China refused to permit any French interference therein.



#### APPENDIX.

*Letter A handed to Superintendent, Northern Shan States, on 20th February 1896.*

(In Shan characters.)

MONG LEM SAWBWA MALA WANG SA writes to Taküt Sawbwa: "Sao Ta Yun with troops will attack Lā Wās on Takoo Lahsan limit; get Hkam Pen Sing; *ex*-Myoza of Mong Hsaw is head of Lā Wās; will run away and enter Taküt country. Do not receive him. Arrest him and put on H pang Naga and hand over to Sao Ta Tun, who will be graciously inclined to you, if you do so. Remember this. Write and say if you are going to do this."

*Note.*—The Lā Wās referred to are Wās near Mong Hka and Mong Hsaw.

Sao Ta Yun is from Mong King and Mong Lan.

Mong Lem is three marches to Mong Ping, which is one march east of Mong Lan, which is one hard march of Mong Hsaw.

Mong Ping and Mong Lan are Chinese posts. The Chinese have also a post at Mong Hsaw. Two months ago Chinese troops from Mong Lan attacked Mong Hka. The Muhsos resisted and defeated the Chinese, who retired to their posts.

Hkam Pen Sing is a Shan of Mong Hsaw. He writes as follows to Taküt:—

"H pang Naga," referred to is a plank of wood having three holes, one in the centre and one at each end of the plank. The plank, which is thick and made of heavy wood, is put on a prisoner's shoulders, the centre hole is for the neck and head, the arms are stretched sideways, horizontally, and the hands are turned up and passed through the hole at the end of the plank and fastened there. A prisoner fixed up in this manner is absolutely helpless.

*Letter B in Shan characters handed to Superintendent on 28th February 1896.*

"I, with five influential Wā headmen and five influential Muhso headmen, have agreed to petition the Sawbwa (Ton Hsang Sawbwa of Mong Lun) that we are the essential headmen and ask the Sawbwa to back us up. Hpa Long, the Ta Lao Yeh of Mong Hka, the head Muhso headman, has obtained Chinese troops and is starting a post and city at Mong Hka with 500 or 600 men and waiting for the Kalās\* to come. Hpa Lang will not keep anybody who is willing to receive the Kalās into the country. All the Muhsos have bolted into the jungle. Please help us at once and arrange that the Superintendent should come up at once and settle matters."

Lao Lon (Muhso) of Ho Cha or Nan Cha brings letters from Ho Cha, Tong Chien, and Shang Kai Hsom.

*Letter C in Chinese characters.*

"The Muhsos of the above places complain that their country has been ruined for the last 10 years and they have been looking for help to Government for six years."

(The above from Ho Cha and Shang Kai Hsom.)

The Tong Chien people present similar petition saying Chinese are devastating their country and they are looking to us for assistance.

The Tong Chien people also present a second petition to the effect that "they originally came from ( ? ); they had a pôngyi who would not eat meat or drink liquor. Nyim Tai (Tigh) and Nyim Nen subject to Mong Lem. Mong Lem took Rs. 500 for this from the Muhsos and divided the money among Nyim Tai, Nyim Nen, Mong Ping, and Mong Lan. The Muhsos and Mong Lem were bad friends after this. Nyim Tai headman Khim Seng tore off pôngyi's clothes. Altogether the Muhsos lost Rs. 500."

*A short account of local politics in Man H pang, given me on my arrival by the two Amat-gyis I found there.*

About five years ago, when the Superintendent came from Lashio, Maha Na Lao (San Maha) intended rebelling against the Superintendent, but he went to Mong Lem and thence to Molit (Motlè!), Matet, and Ngek Ting with a following of about 100 men. Promising his band the plunder of East and West Mong Lun if he should be successful in again taking these places, he had induced the inhabitants of the above three districts to side with him. Some of the people of these places, however, do not approve of Maha Na Lao and his proceedings. Maha Na Lao wants to take Man H pang. His force is about 2,000 men, of whom 1,000 have guns, the remainder are armed with bows, which shoot poisoned arrows. The Sawbwa of Mothai, Mow Ming by name, who lives at Loi Pwi, on the right bank of the Salween, sent information to the Government when Maha Na Lao came to the districts, which was about a year ago. The Sawbwa of Mothai is not now at Loi Pwi; he has gone to Mong Lun. The inhabitants of Mothai are peaceful and only wish to remain under Government protection. Maha Na Lao is a rebel; when he hears the troops are coming about the country he leaves the three districts, but no sooner do the soldiers go away than he comes back. At present Mothai people are in a state of unrest and never know what may happen.

\* The Natives of India, foreigners in general: refers here to British.



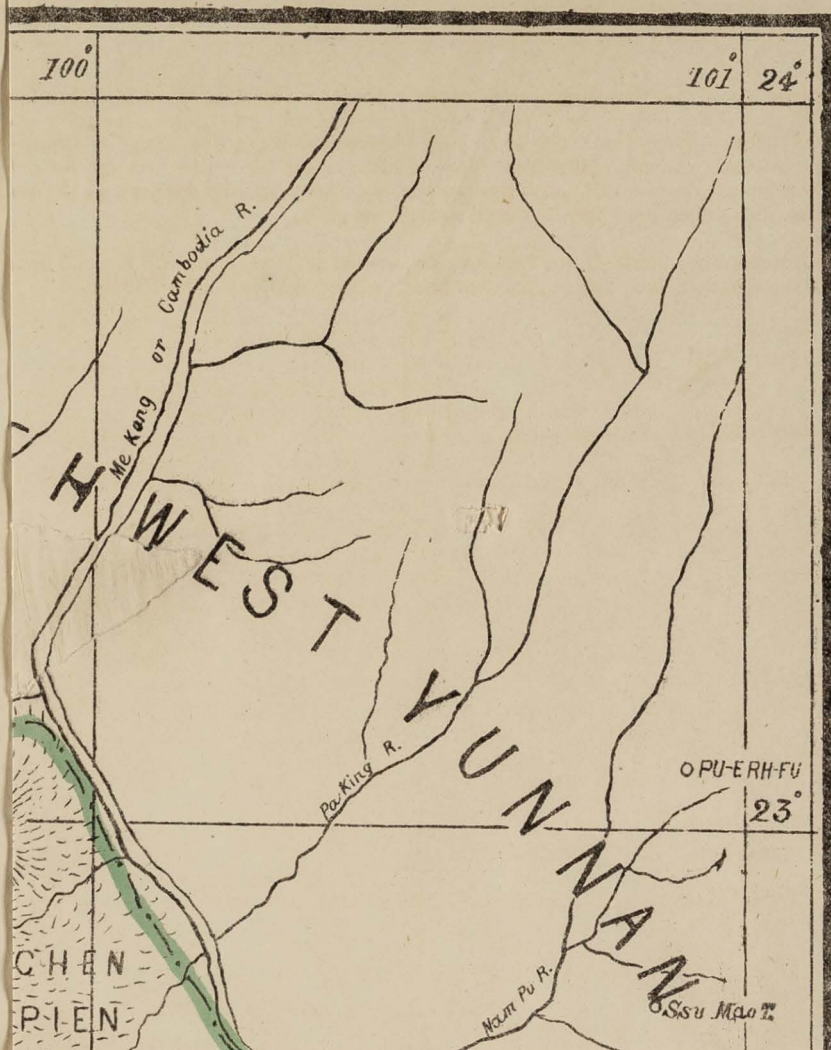
1. Rumour has it that Sau-Maha, who formerly possessed land in West Monglun and who refused to obey the orders of the Superintendent, crossed over into Chinese territory and tried to get assistance from the Chinese Deputy Commissioners in the shape of Chinese troops, or at any rate cannon and rifles. The Chinese must have put him off, for it is certain that we encountered no Chinese troops, nor did the Was who opposed us possess any cannon or rifles; they only had flint lock and cheek guns.

\* \* \* \*

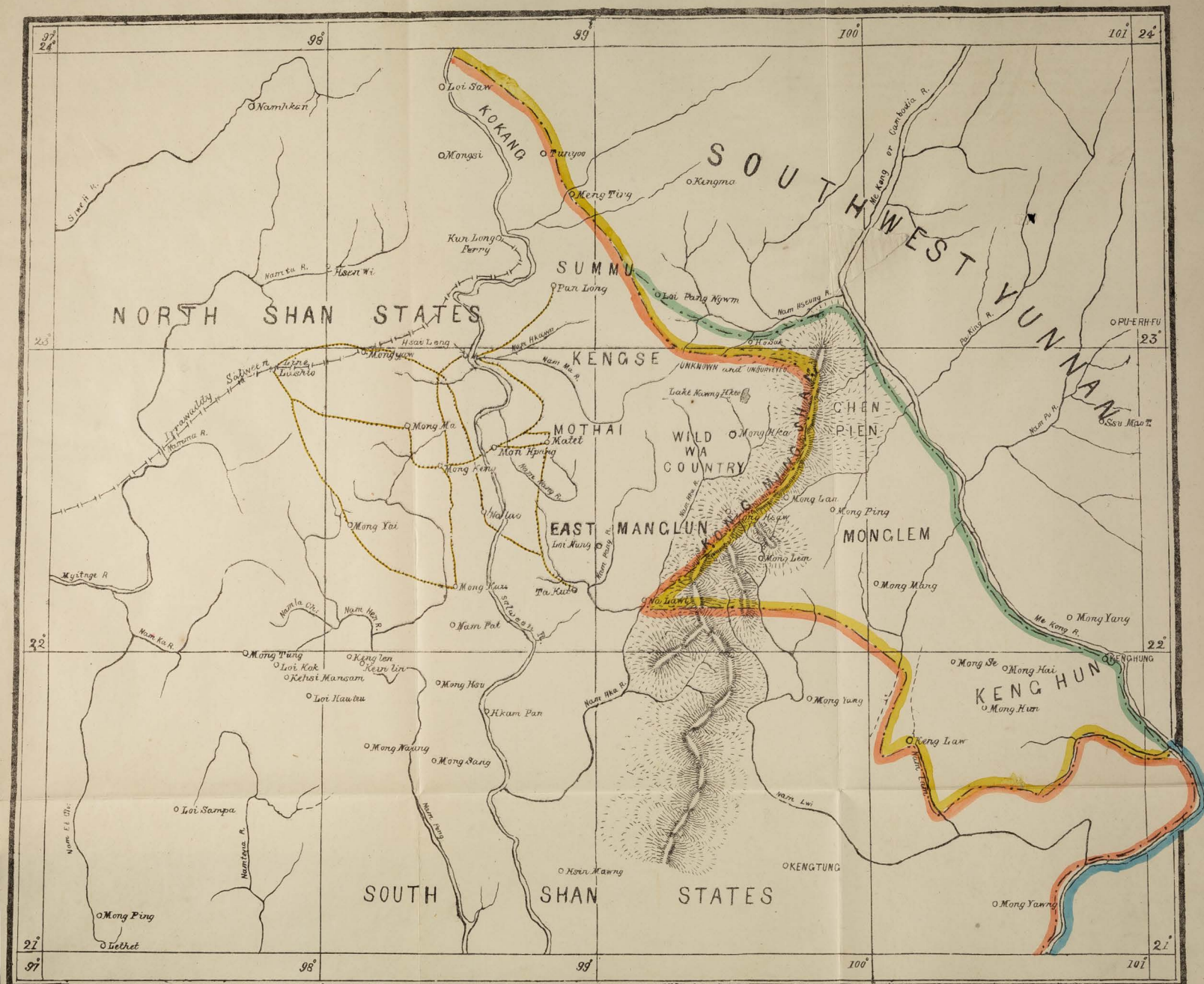
2. The future movements of our columns on arrival at Mong Hka will depend upon the action of the Chinese, who are reported to have crossed the Nam Hka stream.

G. B. C. P. O—No. 5149, I. B., R., 11-8-96—180.









Intelligence Branch Office Rangoon 17th June 96.

On Transfer My. Tun Hla U. I. B.

No. 1074-1-96.

England----- Frontier between England and China  
China----- approximate only, not as yet defined.  
France----- East of the R. Salween up to the Mekong River  
Proposed extension----- and between latitudes 22 and 24 the country  
is very little known and parts are entirely so.  
Yellow line, country traversed by self.

Scale 16 Miles = 1 Inch  
Miles 0 10 20 30 40 50 60 Miles

Sgt. C.B. Marquard Lieut.  
1st Lancashire H.C.  
Attache Intelligence Branch  
17th June 96.



